

District Councillor's Report Feb 27th 2024 - Cllr Tom Bygott

Installation of new defibrillators

Defibrillators have been installed outside five of the District Council's sheltered communal rooms at:

- Thistle Green Communal Room, Swavesey
- Wilford Furlong Communal Room, Willingham
- Cox's Close Communal Room, Stapleford
- Avenells Way Communal Room, Gamlingay
- Denson Close Communal Room, Waterbeach

Anyone in the community can access these units in an emergency. Defibrillators are on standby 24/7 ready to save lives. Every second counts in cardiac emergency situations and these machines can help ordinary individuals become lifesavers in extraordinary circumstances.

Four of these were funded by the District Council's sheltered housing team securing match-funding from the Department of Health and Social Care Community Defibrillator Scheme, a £1 million fund aimed at increasing the number of Automated External Defibrillators in public places where they are most needed and help save lives. The fifth was funded by Waterbeach Parish Council.

Defibrillator locations can be identified across the UK at: www.defibfinder.uk

Best Value Notice

The District Council continues to be subject to a Best Value Notice from Government. It appears that the administration has not been able to supply answers to all of the initial queries and requests. The Government has subsequently requested further information from the Council.

When there will be a vote to make the trial permanent or not is yet unknown. The Council's Cabinet may alone decide to extend the trial.

Four-day week data published

On 22 January 2024, the administration finally published the four-day week performance data on the council's website that are being sent to government under the Best Value Notice. This data can be found at: www.scamb.gov.uk/your-council-and-democracy/best-value-notice-data-requests/#doc-list-53840-53842.

The publication of the data follows my team's hard-fought battle to gain access to this information for residents and councillors.

At an Extraordinary Full Council meeting on 20 November 2023, one of my colleagues asked to see the business case for the four-day week. In January, a response to this request still had not been received to see the business case and my colleague followed up on this request. It then turned out that there was no business case – only the original seven page proposal agreed by Cabinet in September 2022. It dealt with the financial implications of the trial with terse the statement: "Financial 27. There would be no cost to undertaking the trial. Legal 28. ...".

Everything the council does has a cost attached – any time spent on projects by council officers is time being paid for and costing residents, which is why it is so concerning that the Cabinet paper said there was no cost associated with the trial. With no business case to underpin the trial I am very concerned that the true cost of this trial has not been properly considered.

While we have succeeded in getting the administration to share the data they are sending to government, things will not stop here. I will continue to push for more transparency in relation to the four-day week to enable residents to see where their money is going.

Future of Local Housing Consultation

The Housing Strategy for Greater Cambridge has recently been reviewed and sets out a vision for the next five years. The public are now being asked to comment. The consultation runs until 4 March 2024, and gives an opportunity to shape and influence the final strategy before it is finalised in the summer.

More information on how to share your views can be accessed via: www.scams.gov.uk/have-your-say-on-the-future-of-local-housing

Survey on electric vehicles and charging points

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority is conducting a survey closing on March 26th to ask for views about electric vehicles and charging points. The Combined Authority is responsible for transport planning in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, and its recently approved Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) aims to transform journeys in the region, including by lowering greenhouse gas emissions to support net zero carbon emissions targets.

Working with Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council, the Combined Authority wants local opinions to help plan for more electric vehicle (EV) charging points in the region to help meet demand. The Combined Authority wants to make sure they are planned for in the right way, informed by people's views. The Combined Authority aims to help bring forward enough charging points in the right places to support the growing transition to EVs.

The survey asks questions such as: "Are you thinking of buying an electric car? What might be stopping you? The region is estimated to need up to 10,000 charging points by 2030, but what are the best places for them? What about accessible charging points for people who don't have off-road parking?" All views are important, whether people own an EV or not.

The Combined Authority is also working with Peterborough City Council and Cambridgeshire County Council on a draft Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy which will be further informed by the survey feedback.

The survey can be accessed:

- Online at <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/ev-charging/>
- Sending email comments to transport@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk.
- On paper by requesting a hard copy by emailing transport@cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk or calling 01480 277180.

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